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IN THE

Supreme Court of the United States

OCTOBER TERM—1948

LAURIE J. CARPENTER,

Appellant,

—v.—

ROHM AND HAAS CO. INC.

PETITION FOR WRIT OF CERTIORARI TO THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE THIRD CIRCUIT AND BRIEF OF PLAINTIFF IN PERSON

LAURIE J. CARPENTER,
Plaintiff in Person,
458 W. 35th St.,
New York 1, N. Y.

SUBJECT INDEX

	PAGE
Petition for Certiorari	1
Jurisdiction of the Court	3
Statement of the Case	3
Argument	5
Statement of No Assignment of Errors	7
References	
Delaware Statutes, Code 5133	5, 6
Delaware Statutes Code 5137	5, 6
25 Del. 274	5
Delaware Constitution Article 1 Section 1	2
United States Code, Sec. 767	6
Federal Rule 8d.	6
Atlantic Reporter 29a 2d, page 802 par. 16	5

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PETITION FOR CERTIORARI

To the Honorables, The Chief Justice of the United States and Associate Justices of the Supreme Court of the United States.

Your petitioner, Laurie J. Carpenter, respectfully submits his petition for a writ of Certiorari to review the decree of the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit in the above entitled case.

The Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit has affirmed an order dismissing the complaint in the District Court of the United States for the District of Delaware.

The jurisdiction of the Court is where a Court of Appeals has decided an important question of local law in a way probably in conflict with applicable local decisions.

The only question presented is the time within which an action for damages can be maintained.

The reason relied on for the writ is 5137 of the Delaware Code. It is the only statute in Delaware on which an action could be maintained for fraud and concealment, except a waiver. It is a special right given to an individual class and supersedes the ordinary right. Article 1 Section 1 of the Constitution of Delaware says, if technical words are given a peculiar meaning in law such meaning shall be applied and therefore the ordinary right need not be taken literally to exclude the special rights.

LAURIE J. CARPENTER,
Plaintiff in Person,
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BRIEF IN SUPPORT OF PETITION

Jurisdiction of the Court

The jurisdiction of the Court is where a Court of Appeals has decided an important question of local law in a way probably in conflict with applicable local decisions.

Statement of the Case

The case was called in the District Court of the United States for the District of Delaware for decision of questions of law.

The Defendant asked to put in an amended answer, which was granted on oral consent of Plaintiff.

When the order was put in, the words, "or otherwise plead", were inserted.

The amended answer added a defense of limitations, which had not been mentioned on the motion to amend, though an intention to move for summary judgment had been mentioned.

At the argument of the motion for summary judgment Plaintiff asked to extend the time to maintain an action for concealment by withholding the chemical name of a poison solvent from the labels of an adhesive.

The order of dismissal on the opinion of the District Court was served before presentation for signing and Plaintiff wrote in, quoting the Atlantic Reporter as authority upon which an extension of time could be granted in fraud.

Upon the reply that the Court was informed and consideration after opinion was unusual, Plaintiff did not appear at the signing of the order but took steps to appeal to the Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit.

On the Appeal, the other defense, that the relief could not be granted was also stated but no opinion is given thereon and it would seem that it is not a defense in this case.

The label as described in the affidavit of Mr. David A. Rothrock was printed in red ink on white paper and read as follows:

WARNING—POISON

Avoid prolonged contact with skin. This material contains a volatile solvent which may prove toxic if vapor is inhaled for extended periods. Use only with adequate ventilation. Symptoms: Drowsiness, dizziness, nausea. Treatment: wrap patient in blanket, provide plenty of fresh air.

It is the contention of the plaintiff that the warning is inadequate and actually induces persons to tolerate the poison expecting symptoms as a warning. Symptoms do not appear or, if they do, not until permanent damage has occurred as the nature of the poison is not asphyxiation but is embolism.

The material as used by others was not considered hazardous.

In the examination of the claim it is brought out that the Defendant was insured and the Continental Casualty Co. maintains an office in New York.

ARGUMENT

Summary

5133 of the Delaware Code allowing actions for personal injury within one year is not exclusively the law of Delaware. Exception, limitations must be specifically pleaded and 5137 allows an action within 3 years after removal of disability of coverture. Coverture is concealment in the technical meaning allowed by the Delaware constitution, and is a special right given to an individual class.

ARGUMENT

5133 of the Delaware Code reads, "No action for the recovery of damages upon a claim for alleged personal injuries shall be brought after the expiration of one year from the date upon which it is claimed that such alleged injuries were sustained."

It is not exclusively the law of Delaware. The statute must be specifically pleaded (25 Del. 274) as revised for publication in 1947 by Richards, Layton and Finger of the Wilmington Bar.

The Atlantic Reporter 29a (2d) page 802 par. 16 reads, "Delaware limitation statute permits suits to be brought within 3 years from discovery of fraud".

In 5137 of the Delaware Code, if a party entitled to an action apprehended within one of the foregoing, be under

a disability of infancy, insanity or coverture he may bring an action within 3 years after removal of the disability.

5137 of the Delaware Code is the only statute in Delaware upon which an action can be brought after fraud and concealment. Coverture has a meaning of concealment and would apply as the technical meaning in law under Article 1 section 1 of the Delaware Constitution.

It is a special right given to an individual class and supersedes the ordinary right given in 5133.

A demand that the defendant answer as to what was the chemical name of the poison solvent would accordingly be timely within 3 years after exposure, where there was a question as to what was causing damage of personal injury.

The affidavit of Mr. David Rothrock, that Acryloid B7 was the only one labeled poison and a publication that acryloid B7 was produced in solvent ethylene dichloride is admission that the poison was ethylene dichloride, where it is not denied under Federal rule 8d, so the demand for an answer as to what was the chemical name of the poison solvent is sufficiently satisfied, but recovery of damages by such an omission is not satisfied.

Defense of limitations in the amendment was prejudiced under section 767 of the United States Code as a right remaining in another jurisdiction could be lost by delay.

Statement of No Assignment of Errors

There was no assignment of errors in the District Court as the rule to give notice of appeal does not state that it is required.

Respectfully,

LAURIE J. CARPENTER,
Plaintiff in Person,
458 W. 35th St.,
New York 1, N. Y.

FILED
JAN 18 1949
CHARLES ELMORE CROPLEY
CLERK

IN THE

Supreme Court of the United States

October Term, 1948.

No. 458.

LAURIE J. CARPENTER,

Petitioner,

v.

ROHM AND HAAS CO., INC.,

Respondent.

On Petition for a Writ of Certiorari to the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit.

BRIEF FOR RESPONDENT, ROHM AND HAAS CO., INC., IN OPPOSITION.

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INDEX TO BRIEF.

	Page
The Case Below	1
Statement of the Case	2
Argument	4
Conclusion	5

TABLE OF CASES CITED.

	Page
Forsyth v. Hammond, 166 U. S. 506, 514, 17 S. Ct. 665, 41 L. Ed. 1095, 1098	5
Nigro v. Flinn, 8 W. W. Harr. 368, 377, 192 Atl. 685, 688 (1937)	4

TABLE OF STATUTES CITED.

	Page
Revised Code of Delaware, 1935:	
5133 Sec. 10	4
5137 Sec. 14	4
Laws of Delaware, Vol. 46, Ch. 114	4

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ON PETITION FOR A WRIT OF CERTIORARI TO THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE THIRD CIRCUIT.

BRIEF FOR RESPONDENT, ROHM AND HAAS CO., INC., IN OPPOSITION.

THE CASE BELOW.

The opinion of the United States District Court for the District of Delaware is reported in 75 Fed. Supp. 732 (1948), and the per curiam affirmance of the Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit is reported in 170 F. (2d) 146. The decision of the District Court granting the defendant's motion for summary judgment was on the ground that the plaintiff's claim was barred by the running of the statute of limitations, and the Court of Appeals affirmed on the same ground.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE.

This action was brought in the United States District Court for the District of Delaware by Laurie J. Carpenter, the present petitioner, hereinafter referred to as the plaintiff, against the Rohm and Haas Company, the present respondent, hereinafter referred to as the defendant. The plaintiff asked damages for injuries allegedly sustained by him while he was an employee of the Western Electric Company and caused by a certain product called "Acryloid B-7" which was sold by the defendant to the plaintiff's employer.

The plaintiff in the instant case was employed by the Western Electric Company in its plant at Bayonne, New Jersey, and in its plant in New York City during 1943, 1944 and 1945, as a pressure tester (R. 11). He complained of certain injuries to his health which, he alleged, are a direct result of inhaling the fumes of "Acryloid", an adhesive compound used by his employer for certain purposes in the manufacture of electrical equipment. It should here be pointed out first, that the plaintiff was not employed by the defendant, and secondly, that the plaintiff did not allege that he used the compound of which he complains. The defendant corporation manufactured the compound and sold it to the plaintiff's employer, for use in the employer's plants (R. 13, 14). The plaintiff did not use the compound in his work and was thus not directly exposed to it (R. 11, 12).

As the plaintiff alleged in his complaint, "Acryloid" was supplied by the defendant to the plaintiff's employer in containers which were plainly marked with a warning. The complete legend, which did not appear in the complaint, reads as follows:

"POISON

Avoid prolonged contact with skin. This material contains a volatile solvent which may prove toxic if

vapor is inhaled for extended periods. Use only with adequate ventilation. Symptoms: Drowsiness, dizziness, nausea. Treatment: wrap patient in blanket, provide plenty of fresh air." (R. 13.)

In October, 1943, while employed in the Bayonne plant of the Western Electric Company, the plaintiff reported to the company hospital at Kearney, N. J., and complained of nausea and indigestion which he attributed to fumes from Carbona. At that time he was examined by Dr. Pingitore, and since no ill effects were apparent, he returned to work (R. 11).

In April, 1945, the plaintiff reported to the company hospital at 787 Eleventh Avenue, New York, New York, and complained of pain in the region of the heart, which pain he blamed upon the inhalation of "Acryloid". A medical report of that examination reveals that Dr. Bibbo, the examining physician, discovered no malfunctioning of the heart and ruled out the possibility of "Acryloid" poisoning. It also appears that an investigation was made at the time which definitely revealed that the plaintiff did not use the compound and at most, occasionally smelled it from its use on the next bench, some five or six feet away (R. 12).

The plaintiff was discharged from the Western Electric Company's employed in September, 1945, because the Government contract upon which the plaintiff had been working was terminated (R. 12).

On May 10, 1946, the plaintiff filed a claim under the Workmen's Compensation Act of New York. After several hearings, at which the claimant was instructed to produce medical proof, the claim was disallowed on December 3, 1946, on the grounds that there was no proof of causal connection between the alleged inhalation of "Acryloid" and the alleged disability of the complainant since the plaintiff failed to produce any medical testimony (R. 18).

ARGUMENT.

The decision of the District Court was based upon the Delaware Statute of Limitations raised by the respondent in its answer (R. 9). The statute is found in 5133 Sec. 10, Revised Code of Delaware, 1935, as amended by 46 Del. Laws, Ch. 114 and provides as follows:

> "No action for the recovery of damages upon a claim for alleged personal injuries shall be brought after the expiration of one year from the date upon which it is claimed that such alleged injuries were sustained. * * *"

There is no reported Delaware case, nor any other known to the respondent, which has interpreted the instant statute in such a way as to be in conflict with the decisions either of the District Court or the Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit in the instant case.

It seems needless to add that the so-called "exception" referred to by the petitioner is completely inapplicable to the instant case. That statute is to be found in 5137 Sec. 14, Revised Code of Delaware, 1935 and provides:

> "*Savings; Infancy; Coverture; Incompetency of Mind:*—If a person entitled to any action comprehended within either of the foregoing provisions, shall have been, at the time of the accruing of the cause of such action, under disability of infancy, coverture, or incompetency of mind, this chapter shall not be a bar to such action during the continuance of such disability, nor until the expiration of three years from the removal thereof."

Even if the petitioner were otherwise within the contemplation of the last mentioned section, that section has expressly been held not to apply to Code Section 5133 by the Superior Court of Delaware in *Nigro v. Flinn*, 8 W. W. Harr. 368, 377, 192 Atl. 685, 688 (1937).

CONCLUSION.

The petitioner has failed to bring himself within the purview of Supreme Court Rule 38 (5), and as this Court said in *Forsyth v. Hammond,* 166 U. S. 506, 514, 17 S. Ct. 665, 41 L. Ed. 1095, 1098,

> "• • • And further, that while this power is coextensive with all possible necessities and sufficient to secure to this court a final control over the litigation in all the courts of appeal, it is a power which will be sparingly exercised, and only when the circumstances of the case satisfy us that the importance of the question involved, the necessity of avoiding conflict between two or more courts of appeal, or between courts of appeal and the courts of a state, or some matter affecting the interests of this nation in its internal or external relations, demands such exercise. • • •"

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this Court should not grant certiorari in the instant case.

Respectfully submitted,

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